



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

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May 18, 2022

Honorable Patricia A. Serpa, Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight
101 State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Serpa:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on the RIBridges system, which covers the reporting period March 16, 2022 – April 15, 2022. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement
- RI Department of Human Services (DHS) Employee Training
- Pending Applications
- SNAP Timeliness and Lobby/DHS Call Center Summaries
- CCAP Off-Cycle Payments
- Correspondence with Federal Partners (if any)

We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve, your interest in the health of the RIBridges system and the progress made to address outstanding issues. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yvette Mendez".

Yvette M. Mendez, Acting Director
RI Department of Human Services



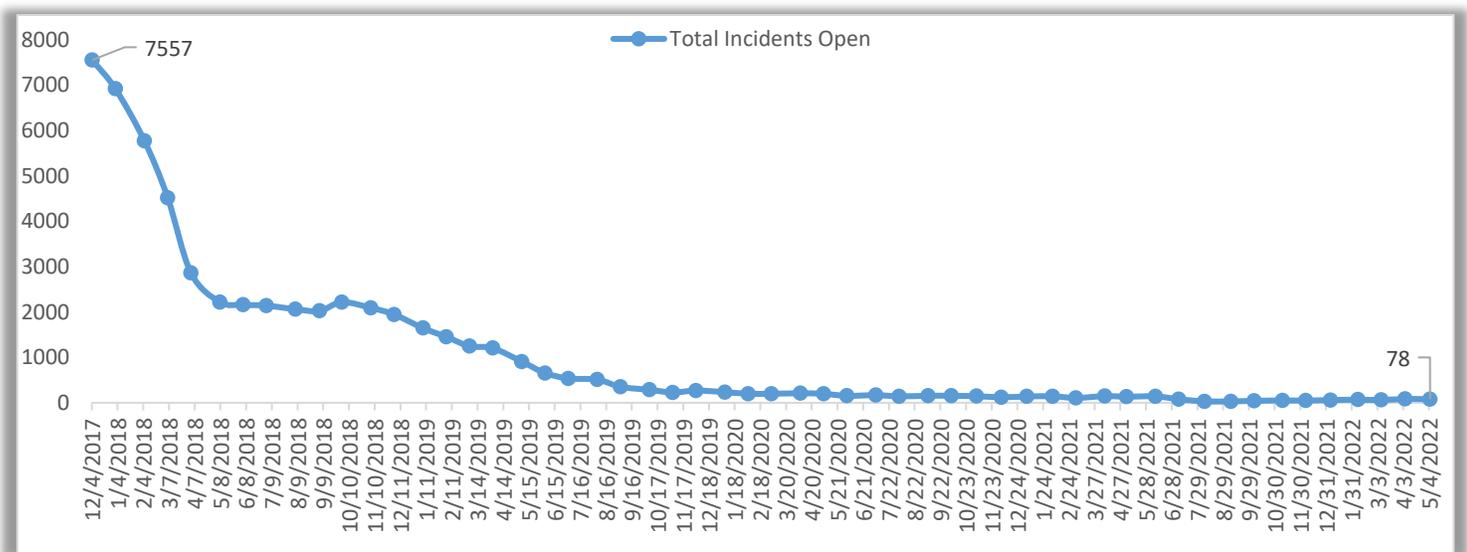
RI Bridges: Monthly Update

May 2022

Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Our oversight of the work on the RI Bridges system is an important part of the equation. With system stabilization under our belt, we continue to focus on ensuring full compliance of the system. This report provides an update on our efforts and progress to date.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE + IMPROVEMENT

Due to a focused effort on consistent and stable system operations, the number of new and existing incidents (when the system does not operate as expected for a DHS customer, worker or provider) has **decreased by 99 percent** since December 2017. As of May 5, 2022, there were **78** open incidents.



DHS STAFFING

DHS continues to make progress in hiring candidates for critical positions identified. Since April, DHS hired 28 employees. This includes:

- 5 Eligibility Technician
- 6 Eligibility Technician II
- 10 Eligibility Technician III
- 1 Customer Service Aide
- 1 Principal Clerk
- 2 Social Case Worker
- 2 Quality Control Reviewer
- 1 Employment and career advisor

DHS TRAINING

Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Office Hours (Four two-hour session)	4-18-2022	8	0	20
	4-19-2022			
	4-20-2022			
	4-21-2022			
Interface Walkthrough: SOLQ (Three one-hour sessions)	5-10-2022	1	0	23
New Hire Orientation (Three full day trainings)	5-11-2022	13.5	7	0
	5-12-2022			
	5-13-2022			
May Quarterly Meeting (Two two-hour sessions)	5-10-2022	4	0	92
	5-12-2022			
Totals		26.5	7	135*
Rhode Island Learning Center Trainings (These trainings are self-directed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'DHS FTI, HIPAA, and Confidentiality' -- 670 staff enrolled • 'Telephonic Signature' -- 119 staff enrolled • 'Telephonic Signature -Elderly and Disabled Adults (EAD)' -- 40 staff enrolled • 'Asset Verification System (AVS)' -- 119 staff enrolled • 'Customer Portal' – 418 enrolled • 'SNAP Reinvestment Updates' - - 416 enrolled • 'Visit Record' --419 enrolled • 'RIW Mini-Series Completed' -- 92 enrolled • 'Scheduling Refresher' -- 336 enrolled • 'Medicaid Renewal Refresher' - - 289 enrolled 	Combined total of 1,563* staff trained on LMS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 503 Completed FTI • 38 Completed Telephonic Signature • 21 Telephonic Signature EAD • 87 Completed AVS • 292 Completed Customer Portal • 183 Completed SNAP Reinvestment Training • 231 Completed Visit Record Training • 45 Completed the RIW Mini-Series • 135 Completed Scheduling Refresher • 28 completed Medicaid Renewal refresher 		

** This number is duplicate and based on number of staff enrolled to attend training.*

Workshop Descriptions

Interface Walkthrough: SOLQ: This session provides a breakdown of how to understand data from the SOLQ interface and how the interface can be used to verify information in RIBridges. The walkthrough includes a general overview of where to enter the information into the RIBridges Unearned Income Screen.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Training Series: The SNAP Training Series is designed to introduce New Eligibility Technicians to SNAP program policy and RIBridges. A wide range of operational tasks are covered and/or discussed to help ensure Eligibility Technicians are prepared for the variety of questions and challenges they may encounter in their role.

New Hire Orientation: The goal of the session is to provide new employees with all the pertinent information they need to begin working at DHS, and to familiarize them with organizational policies and procedures. Besides introducing employees to the RIBridges system, participants learn:

- The organizational hierarchy
- DHS' mission and vision
- A broader understanding of DHS programs and services
- Policies and procedures regarding payroll, dress code, and other practices
- the LEAN initiative
- Rules, regulations and laws surrounding Federal Tax Information (FTI), Civil Rights, Voter Registration, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Basic navigation and data collection methods in RIBridges

Quarterly Meetings: DHS holds quarterly meetings with staff members to inform staff about upcoming changes, program updates, accomplishments, and to show appreciation for our staff members.

Rhode Island Learning Center Trainings: These trainings are self-directed. Staff are enrolled through the Learning Management System.

- **FTI/HIPAA:** This is a required training for all DHS employees. This refresher training covers the federal regulations and internal procedures that staff need to follow in protecting customer information.
- **Telephonic Signature/Telephonic Signature - EAD:** To work new documents such as applications, recerts, interims (with a change) and employment plans over the phone, it is imperative that either a signed document is present in the case file OR the worker records a telephonic signature while the customer is on the phone.
- **Asset Verification Training System:** This training provides guidance to staff processing EAD and LTSS requests for Medicaid determinations at the time of application and renewals.
- **SNAP Reinvestment:** This course is designed as a refresher for operations staff on SNAP six-month interim processing. The intent of this course is to review best practices for interim processing.
- **Customer Portal:** This training provides a walk-through of the front and back end of the Customer Portal.
- **Visit Record Refresher:** This course will provide an overview of the Visit Record functionality in RIBridges. The purpose of the training is to increase knowledge on the Visit Record function in RIBridges that will be included in all field offices, enhancing consistency in our processes by appreciating the customer journey.
- **Scheduling Refresher:** This course provides a review of how to use the scheduling functionality in RIBridges.
- **Medicaid Renewal Refresher:** This training provides an overview on how to process Medicaid enrollment.

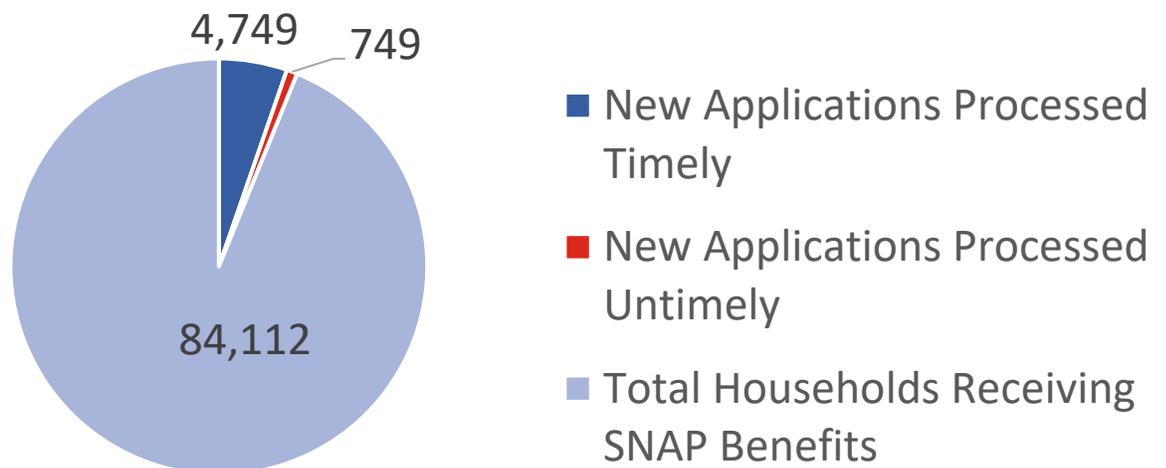
PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of **May 12, 2022**, the number of pending new applications across all programs was **5,947**. The total of overdue, pending applications awaiting State action was **2,270**.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Expedited	48	303	351	14	40	54	405
SNAP Non-Expedited	469	664	1133	38	35	73	1206
CCAP	17	278	295	10	53	63	358
GPA Burial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SSP	0	40	40	0	0	0	40
GPA	18	35	53	2	10	12	65
RIW	110	227	337	12	19	31	368
Undetermined Medical	22	384	406	111	1505	1616	2022
Medicaid-MAGI	48	51	99	86	99	185	284
MPP	5	291	296	25	227	252	548
Medicaid Complex	13	49	62	21	242	263	325
LTSS	13	271	284	2	40	42	326
Totals	763	2593	3356	321	2270	2591	5947

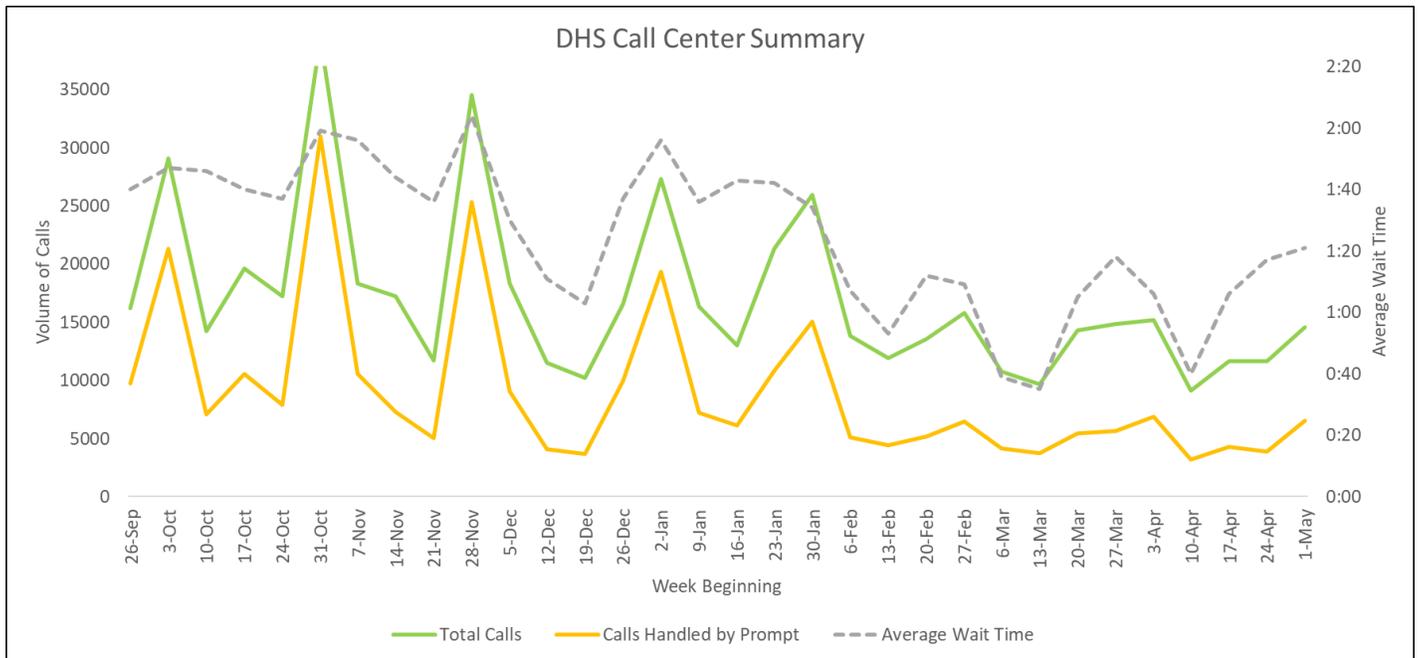
SNAP TIMELINESS

Despite the impact of COVID-19, **84,112** households received benefits in April 2022. About **86** percent of new SNAP applications were timely processed. About 14 percent of applications were processed untimely.



CALL CENTER

For the five-week period of **April 3, 2022, through the week that started on May 1, 2022**, the average wait time to DHS staff was about **1 hour and five minutes**. DHS recognizes this average wait time is longer than it should be due to pressure points DHS is experiencing. The busiest week at the Call Center was the week beginning April 3, 2022, and there were **15,195** calls then.



CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers between March 16, 2022 through April 15, 2022.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
22	4/7/2022	546	\$2,233,168.94
22A	4/8/2022	14	\$143,940.83
22B	4/15/2022	24	\$39,090.79
23	4/21/2022	537	\$2,135,365.00
23A	4/22/2022	18	\$54,680.45
23B	4/29/2022	31	\$114,929.15

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (22, 22A & 22B)	584	\$2,416,200.56
Off-cycle (22A & 22B)	38	\$183,031.62
Provider off-cycle/total	6.96%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	8.20%	-
	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (23, 23A & 23B)	586	\$2,304,974.60
Off-cycle (19A & 19B)	49	\$169,609.60

Provider off-cycle/total		9.12%	-
Payments off-cycle/total		7.94%	-

UPDATE ON RECERTIFICATIONS PROCESS

The State has verified that Medicaid renewals were appropriately initiated by the RIBridges System in compliance with the CMS approved renewal plan.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are important partners to the State. We continue to communicate regularly to review progress with the *RIBridges* system. There wasn't any communication during this reporting period.